

Liz Pearse

BGSU DMA - Contemporary Music
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Teaching voice is an enterprise unlike any other - for it deals with an instrument that one cannot easily inspect, and is situated within the permanent vessel of a living, feeling human. Thus, the voice teacher must evaluate and treat each student holistically - keenly assessing the variety of needs and wishes an individual brings to each vocal encounter. It would be foolish to expect any other musician to possess my same aims, and as a teacher, it is my pursuit to acquire the widest possible set of skills as a pedagogue, in order to best serve my students' varying ambitions.

I believe that knowledge of the vocal instrument from a scientific standpoint is of utmost value to a student, and with every exercise assigned, I seek to demystify the invisible, and at times unpredictable, behaviors of the larynx and physical structures related to singing. With an understanding of how one's voice works physically, a singer is more resilient, and able to use their voice with confidence.

I approach singing from an attitude of vocal exploration, rather than ascribing value to one specific "sound" over others. Through exploration of the myriad timbres, colors, and techniques available to most singers, I lead students to better understanding of the parameters over which they may eventually develop greater control. Human voices are capable of infinite sounds - and by knowing which are easiest, feel the best, and are appropriate for one's unique instrument, one can choose genre, repertoire, and singing avenues that are the best suited for them.

The agency of choice is of the highest importance to me, and as a teacher I create opportunities for guided choice-making. We learn by making choices - for better or worse - and I believe that students are better served when they are able to self-assess and make educated choices with sounds, vocal approach, and repertoire. One cannot authentically make music without personal investment in what they're performing, and I challenge my students to make choices that are meaningful to them.

Coupling a scientific knowledge of how voices work with a holistic care for the needs of each individual student, I may best serve a varied population of vocalists - both within and outside the western classical music community. As collegiate programs and conservatories continue to participate in an ever-expanding musical world, it is my lifelong purpose to listen, to learn, and to support every student to the best of my ability.